



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA TO STUDY HEALTH MANAGEMENT IN SHEEP INDUSTRY

Over the next several months, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will take an in-depth look at the productivity, health and health management issues facing the U.S. sheep industry in an effort to further the understanding of potential disease threats.

The *Sheep 2011 Study* marks the first time in the past 10 years that a USDA study has focused on health management among sheep operations. In January and February, representatives from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), in cooperation with USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), will survey selected sheep operations in 22 states including Virginia.

"The *Sheep 2011 Study* is a grass-roots effort to gather health data on America's sheep farms," said Herman Ellison, director of the NASS Virginia Field Office. "The results of this study will provide a detailed analysis of the top health and health management issues now facing the U.S. sheep industry."

Sheep producers will be asked to provide information on their flock management, breeding practices, biosecurity and sheep health management. The *Sheep 2011 Study* will identify practices and health measures that promote efficient production and improve product quality. In the spring, selected producers will also be contacted by veterinary medical officers or animal health technicians to explain and complete further phases of the study.

As with all NAHMS studies, individual responses are kept strictly confidential and are used only in combination with other responses to report regional estimates. This assures that regardless of size, participating operations cannot be identified when the results of the study are reported.

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